UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

(Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Editor, 1880-1918)

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Religious Liberties

By CLARENCE R. SKINNER

The National Hunger March

By RAYMOND H. PALMER

Gandhi in Switzerland

By SYDNEY STRONG

Twilight of a God

By MORTIMER SMITH

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The Field

"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion."

The Redemption of Cincinnati

So bad was the government of Cincinnati in 1924 that even the streets were full of holes. The helpless taxpayers saw millions of dollars wantonly wasted. Cincinnati was commonly referred to as one of the worst governed cities in America. In 1925 a new day dawned. By 1927 the streets and boulevards were so smooth that salesmen complained they were unable to find places to test automobile springs. All along the line the tax dollar was buying one hundred cents of service. Cincinnati adopted as its slogan, "The best governed city in America"—and came well-nigh deserving the title. The citizens of Cincinnati had organized as effectively as had the politicians in days gone by. Their organization had put over a new form of government responsible for Cincinnati's redemption. How the organization was developed, how it may be developed in any other city, is told by Mr. Henry Bentley in an article in the *Survey Graphic* for October, 1931. An abbreviation of Mr. Bentley's article follows:

In Cincinnati and Hamilton County, in 1924, there were 6,800 jobs and 683 precincts, an average of 10 jobs to a precinct. If each job-holder controlled but two and one-half votes in addition to his own, the sum total was 23,800 votes in the primary. From 1884 to 1924 there had been no primary election in which 25,000 votes were not sufficient to control nominations.

Nominations once decided, the ordinary voter had no real choice of candidates, since his choice was between two hand-picked slates, the one termed Republican and the other Democratic.

This situation was conquered by citizen organization. A group of civic-minded citizens, absolutely disassociated from any political machine, organized a citizens' party. We called it the City Charter Committee. The same year a city charter was adopted changing the form of government from a mayor and a council of 32—26 elected from wards and 6 at large—to a council of 9, elected at large by proportional representation, and a city manager selected by council.

How was this accomplished? By adopting the same sort of organization for political purposes that has proved successful in business and in social service. We utilized an unpaid board of directors and paid skilled executives. We aroused a new loyalty in the citizens by declaring that the responsibility rested upon them, and that all workers in the wards and precincts must be volunteers and must work for the cause of good government alone. The system of party patronage to reward workers was abolished. The people met the test.

Obviously the first step necessary to correct the abuses of the political organization was to centralize responsibility. We proposed cutting the num-

(*Continued on page 263*)

UNITY

"He Hath Made of One All Nations of Men"

Volume CVIII MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1932 Number 16

THE SECOND COMING

For greater security, Christians have put off the second coming of Christ—until the end of the world.

The Jews accused Christ when he came of being a false Messiah. The Christians will accuse him when he returns of being the Anti-Christ.

When Christ comes again, he will have to give up being an Asiatic and a carpenter if he wishes to be freely admitted into the Christian countries of America and Australia.

If it pleased the Native of Judaea to reappear as a "native" of India, how many Englishmen would remain Christians?

If Christ came, would he not choose again to be the son of the enslaved people rather than a citizen of the empire?

The Christ, if he comes, will not be of the white race; the colored peoples could not put their trust in him.

If Christ has not changed his ideas, Christians, when he returns, will have to change their habits.

—*Paul Richards,* in "The Scourge of Christ."

The New York *Evening Post,* conservative newspaper, ventures a radical prophecy of what will happen in this new year (1932), as follows:

Hitler will be elected, by due process of law, boss of Germany.

Hitler, thereupon, will let a little blood. He will shoot a few Communistic and Socialistic leaders, just to prove that he is the boss.

Hitler will then proceed to renounce and denounce the Treaty of Versailles.

Then what?

Then will come the most doubtful moment of the whole prophecy: Will or will not France, in defense of the Treaty of Versailles, send her troops to reoccupy the Ruhr?

Our prophecy is that she will, because France, with all her selfishness, has a cold intellectual realization of the fact that we all are still fighting the World War.

Germany was "licked" militarily in the actual fighting. Germany then turned to the economic fighting, and has now been licked on that. Germany today turns to the third phase of all revolutionary cycles, the demagogue—Hitler. Hitler, logically, should be Marat, the afterbirth of the French Revolution. He is the final phase.

If France goes into the Ruhr, Germany will fight. It doesn't matter whether the Germans know in advance that they are bound to be defeated by the French military machine, the dominant military machine in Europe. The Germans will fight with broomsticks, if necessary, but they will fight.

They may fight France or they may fight themselves. Our prophecy is that, in the one way or the other, we shall see a reign of blood and terror in Germany.

This will be the last ultimate form of the World War. Germany will finally be licked. Germany will lick herself. There will be incidental blood letting.

But out of it all will come reality. Out of it will come a consciousness to the world that we definitely have cleaned up the Great War. Out of it, if this prophecy of ours runs, will come a conservative government for Germany. Out of it will come the end of the uncertainty that hangs over all of us; out of it will come a new start toward the real world adjustment which we call Prosperity.

We agree with all this—as far as it goes! But it does not go deep enough, and thus does not indicate at all the ultimate implications of the events forecast. According to this prophecy, Germany, licked economically as she was formerly licked militarily, will then "be good" and proceed at last to pay reparations and carry out other terms of the Versailles Treaty. Then "a new start" for the world, and—"Prosperity"! This is, of course, ridiculous, since it ignores the obvious fact that German political confusion means German economic collapse. What is coming with the German debâcle is the ruin of that whole structure of European society in which Germany is the keystone of the arch. With Germany gone, everything goes. Europe reverts to the Dark Ages. France can march her armies into the Ruhr till every last *poilu* is on German soil. But what of it? What will her soldiers do? They can get no money out of an impoverished people, and the restoration of the Versailles Treaty is as impossible as the putting up again of Humpty-Dumpty, which it will be remembered not "all the king's horses nor all the king's men" could do. The *Evening Post* sees what's coming, but can not, or dare not, face the consequences.

Gandhi returns to an India in a ferment of revolt. No longer is there any doubt as to what is going to happen. We doubt if even the Mahatma could still the uprising which has followed upon the failure of the Round Table, if he wanted to. But he does not want to! His one intention, evidently, is to organize the new campaign for liberty on the widest and most effective lines, and above all hold it to the faith of non-violence. Even this will tax his marvellous powers of leadership to the utmost, as witness the assassinations which have answered the unprecedented repressive measures of the British Raj. The real seriousness of the situation, however, was best shown some weeks ago when the wild story came out of London that the Prime Minister was going to *fly* to India. On the surface this proposal, if

true, was only one more illustration of Mr. MacDonald's extraordinary Messianic complex—that he, and he alone, can save any situation in the Empire. But the report has much deeper implications. On the one hand, it indicates clearly that India is seething with a revolt more terrible than Britain has ever faced. Why otherwise should the commander-in-chief consider dashing to the front? On the other hand, it proves conclusively that the trade situation in England is desperate—that the Indian boycott is steadily and swiftly bringing ruin to a kingdom already in the last straits of economic disaster. If the Empire is to be saved, its commerce must be saved. If, or rather when, India gains her freedom, the victory will be won not so much on the battle-front in Bengal as on the home-front in London. English rule in India will collapse, in other words, from sheer economic inability to keep up the fight. Nobody knows this better than the Mahatma. If he gained nothing else in England, he gained the knowledge that Britain was collapsing and must therefore sooner drop India from a grasp no longer strong enough to hold it. All the Indians have to do is to hold out—and their goal is won!

The situation in China is now so bad that it is quite impossible to conceive how it can get any worse. The attack of Japan—a war, however much it may be called otherwise!—has stripped away Manchuria, which will now be treated exactly as Korea has been treated. The uprising of Communists inside the country has come as a natural reaction upon the disasters in the north, and has thrown the nation into a condition of utter anarchy. The resignation of Chiang and his associates was a kind of last straw, and we may now expect a period in which civil war, banditry, and general rioting will continue unchecked over an ever wider and wider area. Meanwhile millions of people, who desire nothing more than to be left alone in their homes and on their little farms, will be faced by the elementary problem of getting food enough to live. What these humble folk will suffer the world will never know, but it is probable that death will take a toll of these swarming multitudes unprecedented in history. If there is any parallel to the present situation in China, it may be found perhaps in Europe at the time of the break-up of the feudal system. One order of society (the feudal) passed, and another order of society (the nationalist) came. In between was an interval of about two hundred years during which there was little order and less safety. China seems now to be entering upon some such dark period of transition. The ancient monarchy is dead, the new republic is trying to be born. In this fast-moving age the *interim* of stress and agony may be much shorter than it was in Europe. But, long or short, millions of unoffending folk will pay the bitter price while chieftains wage their futile fights for loot and power. And then, at last, what will come of it all? Another armed nation, like Japan? If so, is there any more hope for Asia than for Europe?

We were thinking the other day of our old friend, Walter Walsh, leader of the Free Religious Movement in London, who died some months ago. Dr. Walsh was one of the most stalwart champions of the British Labor Party, a radical on the extreme left who was moved by ethical and spiritual convictions of the purest character. Suppose, we said to ourself, that Walter Walsh should revisit the glimpses of the moon some night, and wander into the Houses of Parliament. He would turn first, perhaps, to the Lords, just to amuse himself a bit. There he would see on the half-empty benches the stolid forms of Britain's noble Tories—the hard-shell, die-hard aristocrats who block every road to progress in the Empire—the men whose very titles betray their repudiation and contempt of democracy. But—who does he see on that front bench? Surely that frail and twisted figure, that gaunt face, can be none other than Philip Snowden. But Snowden in the House of Lords! This uncompromising champion of the people a member of this body of peers and prelates which he has sought for a generation to destroy!! Amazed, stupefied, Dr. Walsh's perturbed spirit makes its way to the Commons, and there—angels and ministers of grace defend us!—what does he see? J. Ramsay MacDonald sitting on the front bench, side by side with Stanley Baldwin and Austin Chamberlain! The leader of the Labor Party backed by the solid phalanx of the largest Tory majority in the history of modern England!! The Sir Galahad of British Socialism fighting the battles of hard-pressed privilege and pelf!!! What words could tell to Dr. Walsh's ghost the tale of what has happened in the last three months? What explanations could satisfy his demands for an explanation? The impossibility of answers to these questions is the perfect demonstration, as we see it, of the impossibility of justifying what MacDonald and Snowden have done. It is only as we get some such perspective on the picture as this provided by the imagined return of a dead man to this planet, that we can really see the significance of the present situation. It's all wrong—or else there is nothing right!

More and more, as time goes on, we find ourselves uninterested in the project of a so-called "third party." We ought to be interested, if only because we *have* been interested. We remember that, in our callow youth, we voted for Theodore Roosevelt when he promised to lead America to the promised land over the trail of the "Bull Moose." We recollect as though it were yesterday the exciting campaign for La Follette and the Progressives. But these movements came to nothing. They embodied striking personalities, or expressed accidental circumstances which had no permanence. The man or the moment gone, the parties

were gone also, and Republicans and Democrats continued to divide honors as well as spoils. Now that another "third party" movement is in the wind, we find ourselves with little heart for the adventure, nor any fact in the present political situation to beguile us. The League for Independent Political Action, it seems to us, moves not an inch. The progressive senators, masters of the Democratic or Republican machines in their respective states, seem not at all inclined to join either individually or collectively an independent movement. Gifford Pinchot, one of the most sincere and attractive figures in public life today, has little strength outside his own state. What chance is there of organizing or maintaining a third party? None at all, so far as we can see. And, when you come right down to it, what *need* is there of organizing a third party? By this inquiry we suggest no surrender to the old-line political machines. Our thought is rather of an already existing third party, Socialist, which has been bravely in the field these many years, has now at last become thoroughly Americanized, possesses in Norman Thomas a candidate deserving of every confidence, and presents in its platform a program of reform which embodies constructive, far-visioned, and sane statesmanship. Is there any longer any reason why liberals and progressives should not make this group the third party they keep talking so much about? Is their reluctance to support the Socialists anything more than a "hangover" from the old prejudice which used to identify Socialists with Anarchists and Nihilists?—This is a problem worth pondering.

Rev. Raymond H. Palmer, our editorial colleague on this paper, lost his pulpit some weeks ago. This pulpit, in Lynn, Massachusetts, is a Unitarian pulpit which boasts of its ideals of truth and freedom. Mr. Palmer is a man who took these ideals seriously in his ministry, and bravely lived up to them. The result was an attack upon his preaching by wealthy and socially influential members of his parish, and a deliberate attempt to silence him. When Mr. Palmer, faithful to the prophetic tradition even at the peril of financial disaster to himself and his large family, refused to have the gag put upon his lips, the rich leaders of the parish by the usual methods of conspiracy and terrorization forced the issue by securing an acceptance of Mr. Palmer's "resignation." So open and flagrant a violation of the basic principles of liberal religion was this action, that *Zion's Herald,* Boston organ of the Methodists, was moved to vigorous protest. Rumors of the outrage reached as far as Chicago, and stirred the *Christian Century* to noble utterance. The *Christian Register,* the Unitarian organ, however, is significantly silent, and officers of the American Unitarian Association are joining hands with the triumphant remnant of the Lynn church in trying to find some Unitarian minister weak and cowardly enough to consent to be Mr. Palmer's successor. We are not at all surprised that the Association should act in this indecent way. We are very considerably surprised that the *Christian Register,* which in times past has not been afraid to speak out, has not taken up this issue. But our real surprise is that the Unitarian clergy, as fine a set of men as any church can boast in this country, has as yet done nothing to defend and vindicate their comrade.

Religious Liberties

Freedom is one of the fundamentals and persistent problems of the human spirit: It is never completely or finally achieved; for freedom, like man himself, is in constant flux. It must be re-defined in terms of the "continual elaboration of the absolutely new." It must be fought for by each generation, and by each individual, for there is strictly speaking no such thing as inherited liberty.

Institutions, modes of living, and persons may be guaranteed by law a right to exist without undue restraint or encumbrance. But freedom which has been passed on from generation to generation is simply custom. Such custom may be less or more restraining in its influence upon man. Some countries may have customs which allow much latitude for the expression of the growing life of the spirit, and people living in such culture areas are certainly much more free than persons living in lands where they are constantly hedged about with restraint; in the legalistic sense of the term, it may therefore be possible to "secure the blessings of liberty" by law and to write freedom into constitutions in such a way that it may be guaranteed for centuries.

But in the spiritual sense, such is not freedom. It is merely another form of slavish imitation. It is merely following in the beaten paths where freedom once dared to go. And when it requires no courage to say or do things which our forefathers died for saying or doing,—then we know that *we* are no longer free men. Liberty in order to be true, must be contemporary, it must be won at sacrifice; it must be fought for, or it dies.

This is true in every phase of life at every stage of its development. The past can not guarantee the spirit of liberty for the future, not only because liberty is a living thing, but also because the past can not forsee the new situations which will inevitably arise. In the theory of emergent evolution, as applied to both physical, social and spiritual forms, there is always some new element arising which was unknown

and unpredicted in the preceding forms. New principles and laws are therefore needed to meet the new exigencies which arise from the emergent and creative forces constantly at work. What is adequate freedom for one phase of life, therefore, is inadequate or inapplicable for another. What is sufficient freedom for one age is obviously insufficient for another.

This can be briefly illustrated by a few concrete examples.

In politics, the freedom won at great cost does not necessarily apply to art or industry or education. These phases of the public mind may still be slavishly chained to old patterns. There may be little osmosis from one institution to another. An emancipation in poetry does not necessarily set free the creative spirit in the family and start a process of redefining and reconstruction. A new movement for unshackling a technique in industry does not necessarily transfer its discipline to city government, music or international tariffs. Each interest of man, while unquestionably related and interdependent, is *sui generis* and must work out its own peculiar methods.

There is always a danger that people shall think of freedom as unitary and singular, whereas it is always fragmentary and plural. Perhaps there is no such thing as liberty; but there are liberties. Such a view of the problem reveals the fact that there is always a danger for persons or institutions which have become emancipated in one phase of culture. They will feel secure in *freedom* in the global and abstract, without knowing freedom in the concrete. The abstract may easily blind the eyes to the specific. Spelling the word liberty in the singular may prevent us from attaining liberties in the plural.

If this be true, then it follows that religious liberties are never completely achieved, nor are they ever adequate. Despite phrases in the constitution and oratorical gestures on occasions of our solemn assemblies, religious life is held in thrall, and ever will be, without a sense on the part of religious persons that religious emancipation must be continuously fought for.

There are two types of freedom in religion, as in all other culture—forms, namely, negative and positive. In the negative form lies the unshackling of the individual mind and institutions from compulsions and restraints, from any kind of tyranny which prevents the full and free expression of religious life, and tyrannies may be of the obvious or flagrant sort which cry to high Heaven for rectification; or they may be of a subtle quality which only the sensitive feel.

Both these tyrannies exist today over widespread areas. The one type calls for heroic action, the other for deeper insights and higher consecration.

Of the older and more brutal type of oppression, we have the examples of Hitlerism in Germany and all that it implies of suffering on the part of the Jews. To quote a paragraph from *Opinion*:

> According to this program the Jews must be deprived of citizenship and treated as aliens. They must be prohibited from holding any office and not permitted to influence public opinion through the press. Moreover, all foreigners who have come into the country since 1914 must be banished from the land.

Systematic outrages have been perpetrated against Semites, and open propaganda is conducted in some papers urging the people not to buy from Jewish stores.

Of a similar type has been the drive of the Soviet Government to exterminate the Greek Catholic Church and its influence from Russia. The confiscation of church buildings is easily understood and the liberal mind can readily condone the appropriation of much of the wealth of these churches which has been stored up for centuries in the form of gold, silver and jewels. But if confidential letters from good authority received by the writer are true, there has been a ruthless eradicating of the religious way of life which has gone far beyond the exigencies of a revolutionary government. Religious men and women are intimidated, coerced and made to fear for their very lives.

Recent attacks in Spain upon Catholic property, the burning of convents and monasteries, and the eviction of religious prelates show that toleration and liberty are anything but secure.

In India, the proverbial hostility is perennially cropping out between Mohammedan and Hindu. On occasions of the festivals and holy days, each group sets upon the other with violence and hatred, frequently causing blood-shed and loss of life.

The situation in Palestine smoulders ready to break out into warfare at the slightest provocation. The prejudice between Arab and Jew makes a supersensitive people quick to flame into wrath and brutal attack.

To come closer to home we have in the United States the power of religious conservatism in certain sections of the South to crush and humiliate religious liberalism. We have the vicious and insidious propaganda of both Catholic and Protestant injected into both national and local politics, and the anti-Jewish sentiment which operates socially, and economically as well as religiously.

In addition, it is necessary merely to mention the treatment of religious universities in Transylvania, the attitude of the Fascist government toward Catholic societies in Italy, Mexico's prohibitions, and the Chinese Communists' drive against Confucianism, to realize that religious liberties are far from adequate. The average liberal, far removed from the acuteness and pain of the struggle sits quietly in his arm-chair thanking God that all is serene on the world's religious horizon. As a matter of fact there are battles of world-wide proportion yet to be won.

The second kind of negative religious liberties, the more subtle and perhaps for that reason the more dangerous,—consist in tyrannies of thought, custom, values, ways of life, hostilities without violence, but which

run deep down into the fundamentals of life. Of such are the familiar constraints of orthodoxy, with their unyielding worship of the patterns of thought and feeling revealed in the remote past. It is evident to every progressive thinker that this dominance of form, of ancient content, stifles the creative spirit to an appalling degree throughout the world. We have but to study the fixation of the Hindu on his Vedas, his meticulous observance of ritualism which no longer has a rational meaning in the modern world; his slavish sycophancy to the Brahmin class; his acceptance of unsanitary and ignorant practices which hold him in thrall to disease and superstition. Millions of minds in India have yet to know the liberating effect of new ideas prying loose from the dead and death-dealing past.

Other millions of folk in every grand division of religions are mumbling dried-up formulae, bowing and scraping before their ikons, images, sacred paraphernalia. Confucianists turn their faces to the past for the principles with which to solve the intricate, bewildering problems of today. Mohammedans look for enlightenment in their infallible Koran, filled with its threatenings of Hell, for motivation to the good life. Catholics still practice magic in the elevation of the host; Protestants repeat the creeds of a thousand years ago, adhere to ceremonies as if life were in them, and protest against the urgency of creative force as unspiritual.

Does it matter? It does for two reasons. First, it is a tragedy that the mind and soul of man should sink into such lethargy, and submissiveness; that they should become dulled and beaten into such bovine lifelessness; that the intransigent flame of high adventure should be so stifled.

And secondly, it matters because for good or ill religion holds within its implications, most of the high idealism and ethical fervor as well as spiritual life of man. The highest aspirations of the race gather round the mountain peaks of Moses, Jesus, Confucius, Buddha. Art and poetry, music, politics and economic reform may carry man far toward the heights, and they are destined to reach yet higher achievements. But religion;—in its name the holiest aspirations have become flesh; for it the saints have died; because of it the quest of the uttermost has not perished from the earth.

Therefore it does matter whether the religious life of man is free. If all the high potentialities now implicit in religion could be emancipated from their inhibitions it would be past the imagination of man to conceive the greatness of the creative forces let loose upon the earth.

But the lack of such liberties causes a characteristic condition which the liberal calls the pathology of orthodoxy. It is easy for one outside to diagnose the disease and to note the tragedy of the universal bondage which it causes. But it is not so easy to discover in one's self any *maladie de l'ame* when it pertains to aspirations and values which one associates with the highest.

And this leads naturally to the second type of liberties;—not those which lead to emancipation *from,* but those which lead to freedom *for.* Here we pass from rebellion to achievement, from negative to positive, from destructive to creative. The first, or negative liberty is merely preparatory for the second which is the ultimate value. The first merely removes padlocks from the mind, it does not guarantee that we shall arise and become something larger and better.

After winning the fight against the fixations and restraints of orthodoxy, a free man, in order to achieve a free religion must experience the religious life. It is true that there is a complicated and arduous task before him of re-defining, re-aligning and integrating; a task of finding true emphases, and of rescuing the essentials from the non-essentials. Incrustations of dogma must be removed. Clear thinking is demanded. One must fight his way through the confusions and contradictions of a new world.

But, basically, the task of the free man is to seek things anterior, elementary and ultimate. He must grapple with realities more profound and urgent than the categories of logic. Before a man can attain the full stature of freedom in religion, he must have a religious experience. He must know in the inmost depths of his being something which gives meaning, power and enrichment to life. Enduring and satisfying religion gives one the conviction that one has felt a basic emotion, known a truth which liberates and lifts, experienced a verity whose authenticity is unquestionable.

Gilbert Murray somewhere remarks:

> The great thing to remember is that the mind of man cannot be enlightened permanently by merely teaching him to reject some particular set of superstitions. There is an infinite supply always at hand.

Negative freedom therefore is not enough. We must go on to discover the great affirmations by which men live, and the answers to life's perplexities are not all to be expressed in terms of the glorified question mark, x raised to the nth power, or a supreme vacuity. Beneath all the obscurantisms of theological systems of the past, religion has held within itself life-giving verities. It has led men to see some sort of meaning and purpose in the universe, to discover worlds of value within themselves, and it has provided the reality around which men could integrate their lives.

There is little doubt that Jesus believed that the earth was flat, that devils inhabited the earth and that miracles could happen. Mohammed believed in Hell and in divine intervention in the order of the universe. Abraham and Moses probably believed in magic, and Zoroaster undoubtedly thought that God had selected him to be his peculiar and favorite prophet. All this may be pathetic and to be greatly deplored. But is this

so much worse than to attain complete emancipation from all errors and to remain in a vacuity of negation?

Jesus had a power which was a power unto life, and life more abundant. Every seer and prophet has had superstitions. Gandhi has them. But they and he have something more which is the crown of man's experience—a religion which enriches and expands.

Is there not a disease of modern religious liberalism,—a pathology of religious impotence, of spiritual negation? The orthodox, because he is not in it easily perceives it. The liberal whose liberty has consisted in fighting his way against error and superstition does not sense it. But the time has come when the liberal must grow beyond the anti-mind. He must achieve the positive freedom to experience the highest.

The world waits for a religion which shall be profound as well as true, life giving as well as free. Does such freedom matter? CLARENCE R. SKINNER

Jottings

1932! What is this year going to mean eventually in the annals of human time? Is it unlikely—nay, is it not probable—that it will stand on the record as second only to that other momentous date—1914?

Japan has joined Britain in abandoning the gold standard. O Bryan, thou shouldst be living in this hour!

The Catholic Church is degenerating. Pope Innocent was glad to receive Francis of Assisi in his beggar's garb. But the present Pontiff turned away Gandhi in his loin cloth.

"Good government is no substitute for self-government." It was a great Englishman, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who said this. Why do his successors not remember it in the case of India? And we might do worse than to remember it in the case of the Philippines.

Opinion, a new Jewish weekly published in New York, reminds us that the Hebrew word, "Tzedakah," means "charity as well as justice." The combination of these two meanings in a single word has an enormous significance, once you think about it.

Earl Russell (Bertrand Russell) is returning to England to take his seat in the House of Lords. He will sit, we imagine, not far from Count Snowden (Philip Snowden). This spectacle makes us wonder if the English, after all, have any sense of humor.

J. H. H.

The National Hunger March

Having just staged a little hunger trek of my own, in which I "fled," a jobless parson, from my former New England Unitarian parish, with my wife and our four children, to take refuge on the farm of some friends thirty-five miles from Washington, I was naturally keenly interested in the recent "National Hunger March" on the capital. Accordingly, I went into Washington on Monday morning, December 7, to get what information I could upon such matters.

I arrived at Pennsylvania avenue and John Marshall Place, three blocks below Capitol Hill, just in time to see the marchers, fifteen hundred of them, lining up for their procession to the capitol for the purpose of presenting a petition to the seventy-second congress of the United States.

John Marshall Place is a short side-street which intersects Pennsylvania avenue a quarter of a mile below the shining dome so familiar to American patriots. On this side-street were parked about forty trucks, vehicles of every description from large moving vans to rickety affairs on four wheels that looked as if they had been resurrected from the scrap-heap. In these trucks the Hunger Marchers had come to Washington during the preceding afternoon and night. From Philadelphia, Trenton, Boston, Baltimore, Detroit and other centers of American culture, they had brought their hungry human freight to the national capital.

Strange placards hung to the sides of nearly all the trucks. "There is no unemployment in the Soviet Union," read one. "To hell with fake charity, we want cash relief," said another. "We want food, not bullets," read a third. "Down with charity slop," said a fourth. These sentiments were reinforced on some of the placards by glaring pictures, crudely drawn, in red and black, of workers at the forge with shaggy brows, brutal faces and muscular arms.

The marchers were in line by about 10:30, ready for their "assault" upon the legislative headquarters of the nation. They formed a line which took about fifteen minutes to pass a given point, marching five abreast. They were flanked on either side by hundreds of motor-cycle policemen in blue uniforms. These officers of the law formed a vivid contrast to the rag-tag and bob-tail of humanity which made up the strange procession. The arm of the law had "embraced" them with what the superintendent of police called "forceful courtesy." It was the only embrace and the only courtesy which they received while in Washington.

The fifteen hundred marchers were made up of a motley crew selected from the vast horde of underprivileged men and women who live in the dark corners of America where poverty and disease stalk night and day to exact their heavy toll. Some three or four hundred were negroes, men and women. The rest were to me of indescribable extraction. There were a good many Jews, though the number of them was not excessive. There were many youths, who, if they

had been washed, fed and well clothed, might not have been distinguishable from the smart young pages running errands on Capitol Hill. My heart was torn by the appearance of some of these boys and girls in the line. I wanted to snatch them out, gather them together and go with them myself to the White House to demand that they at least be heard.

Contrary to what were the obvious fears of the solons and the police, the marchers were perfectly orderly, an amazingly well organized group considering their intelligence and the circumstances under which they had come to Washington. They proceeded to the foot of the hill singing the "Internationale" to the tune of "Glory, glory hallelujah," alternating this song with chants demanding unemployment insurance and other relief measures. One of the oft-repeated chants was "Black and White unite to fight," which it seemed to me they carried off with unusual enthusiasm.

They carried about sixty placards some of which read, "Not a cent for capitalistic war," "Down with Jim-crow laws," "No eviction for the unemployed," and "Amnesty for all class-war prisoners." About half, or perhaps more, of the marchers had a white band sewed around their coat sleeves on which was printed "National Hunger March to Washington, December 7, 1931." One marcher carried a bottle of milk and a loaf of bread, or imitations of them, tied to a stick and hoisted high above his head. The Washington newspapers made a good deal of the fact that Vice-President Curtis had not cared to enforce the ruling that no placards were to be carried on the capitol grounds.

When the parade reached the foot of the hill, it turned left, and, marching around the building, lined up in front of the capitol on the Plaza in a space which the police had roped off for the purpose. On the steps, well above the heads of the crowd, at either side of the main entrance, stood three officers like grim statues with dangerous looking fire-arms. Many expected that the marchers would carry bombs, but, so far as I know, the police, who were well-armed with tear bombs, were the only persons so equipped. Below these sentinels on the steps, and between the marchers and the building, was formed a solid line of hundreds of policemen, whose blue uniforms shone brightly in the sunlight under a beautiful blue sky. The whole thing struck me as having something of the ludicrous about it—so much display of armed force in the face of fifteen hundred helpless ragamuffins.

A small military band, dressed in what the newspapers called Russian uniforms, composed of about fifteen instruments, accompanied the marchers, and, standing out in front of them, played while the marchers sang the "Internationale." Every window of the capitol building was filled with spectators, and thousands more, perhaps ten thousand in all, thronged the grounds.

The procession reached the capitol at about 11:15. At 11:30 a delegation of about twenty-five of their number tried to get into the Senate chamber. They were denied admittance. About fifteen minutes later a committee of three marchers, composed of one negro and two whites, proceeded to the door of the building on the right wing and asked for the privilege of presenting their petition to the Senate. This time I accompanied them through the crowd to the door and stood by the side of the spokesman as he asked for permission to enter. The chief of the Capitol Police turned him away saying, "And this is final." The petitioners were courteous. They protested only briefly, obviously at a loss to know how to proceed in the face of this second refusal. They then turned away. Fifteen minutes later the procession was moving around the other side of the building on its way to the White House. Here again they were denied a hearing. The only place where their committee was heard was at the headquarters of the American Federation of Labor where President Green rebuked them for criticisms passed upon the Federation at a mass meeting the night before. The next morning the marchers left Washington.

It will be said by many that this Hunger March was a futile and senseless undertaking. I am not sure that this is the fact. True, the committee got no official hearing. But, from a certain point of view, this was a victory for them and a defeat for the government. They proved that they had been pre-judged without a hearing. The same officials who are accustomed to receiving committees with many foolish axes to grind refused to hear these hunger petitioners. Was it because their cause is, on the face of it, regardless of the specific reforms they advocate, a stinging rebuke to all the ruling classes of America? It does seem that the government was panicky over the appearance of these people in Washington and tried to hide itself behind a smoke-screen of inflated dignity. The very fact, then, that they failed to be heard was not a failure but a success for the marchers. They wanted to prove that the government pays no fundamental, radical attention to the needs of the hungry and destitute, and they came very near making a convincing case of it. They proved at least that hungry people will not be heard in Washington when they come with fundamental criticisms of the government which they wish to petition.

I do not mean to pass judgment on the wisdom of the petition which these marchers had to present. Many absurd petitions are received in Washington with official courtesy. This petition may have been as absurd as any, but that was no reason why it should not have been received in the usual way.

Another reason why the Hunger March was a success is that it was orderly, amazingly so. Fifteen hundred illiterate, hungry, jobless and detested outcasts showed themselves capable of organized restraint. It does look as though the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi had come to America at last. This was a great victory for the marchers. They tramped up and down the broad avenues of the national capital, surrounded by the limousines of the rich and the vain displays of an acquisitive society, and they marched with the same long-suffering forbearance that characterized the Galilean's march up Calvary two thousand years ago. They carried their crude placards, as he carried that greatest of all placards, the Cross, with dignity and meekness, albeit in poverty and woe. Their rags, their sympathy with the Russian revolution, their despised place in the social scale, none of these things can hide from eyes that will see the triumphant fact that these children of the slums conducted themselves with far more dignity than is often displayed by Senators and Representatives in the Congress of the United States.

There is yet another way in which this Hunger

March succeeded. It dramatized a condition which now affects eight or ten millions of people in this country, dramatized an economic situation at the very doors, closed doors, of a congress which will probably do nothing to better the lot of these millions of unemployed Americans. There were only fifteen hundred hunger marchers in Washington. But in America as a whole there may be fifteen millions before the financial and political leadership of this nation has been sufficiently aroused to carry through reforms that go to the very root of the trouble, namely, a system of distributing wealth which cripples the consuming power of the rank and file.

I was impressed by yet another feature of this event. It was in many respects like a religious pilgrimage, like a crusade of old. Here were hundreds of people marching on Washington with the same religious impulses with which Americans in other days went "marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion." The old religious tunes were sung, but to new and strange words. The heaven to which they look is to be found on this earth, during this life. I thought of Reinhold Niebuhr's article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1931, entitled "The Religion of Communism," in which he makes such a good case for Russian Communism as a religion. Here too, in this Hunger March, we have a new phase of the religion of the masses in America. Like many of their more sophisticated fellows, these submerged classes are learning to direct their religious emotions into rivers which flow, not by the throne of an orthodox God, as in that sweet old hymn my mother used to sing so much, but into rivers that flow by the thrones of earthly power.

RAYMOND H. PALMER

Gandhi in Switzerland

Gandhi spent a few days in Switzerland en route for India. I attended three meetings in Lausanne, forty miles up the lake from Geneva. These were held under the auspices of the Christian Socialists; one in the People's Hall—well equipped with radio, photographic machinery, etc.—the second to the "press" when he replied to questions, bombarded at him, as he sat on the floor eating dates—the third in a "House of God" as he called it. At each meeting there was a throng, with many outside eager to come in. He spoke slowly, in English (translated into French by Romain Rolland's secretary) and distinctly, with no attempt at oratory. The three meetings occupied about three hours. He keeps a close guard on his watch, being exact in beginning and closing. His method is largely Socratic—being as much interested in discovering what is in the listener's mind as in his own ideas.

The chairman made four requests of the audience: not to applaud, not to crowd, not to try to shake hands and not to ask for autographs—for "he has been up since 5 o'clock and is a little worn." However, at the church meeting all joined hands and sang a song of fellowship. In all his answers, there seemed to be no attempt to parry or to evade—showing thus that he was himself a fine exponent of his major doctrine that to follow truth is to find life.

Here are some of his answers to queries: "No, no one should ever resort to violence. In so doing, he debases himself and gives a lie to his principle."

"To go into the army with the intention of, on occasion, 'shooting in the air' is not only fabrication, but cowardice. The conscientious objector to war should be like Caesar's wife, 'above suspicion.' "

"It is difficult to deal with men who are afraid of each other, since they have become so emasculated."

"Yes, non-cooperation and non-violence would work in case of a European war, even if one had to stand alone on the principle."

"I do not seek to suppress mechanism—only its supremacy. It is easy to become slaves to mechanism."

"There is no conflict between love of God and love of Man. Where it is found, it lies in the man himself. If love of God supplants love of Man, there is generally a base motive."

"My answer to lies and slanders is not to notice them."

"Our movement in India has never been outside the inspiration of God. Without that inspiration I should consider myself unfit and would expect failure."

"International jealousy will be conquered by international friendship."

"When I say, 'God is Truth,' I mean that I have found God to be Truth. From childhood I have learned thousands of names applied to God. But 'Truth' fits my experience best. I even go a step further and say, 'Truth is God.' This came after a profound search for truth. The nearest approach is 'love' —but I find this word meaning many things. I find too that 'love' as non-violence has few votaries. But, even atheists like Charles Bradlaugh stand for truth, and therefore for God. I call him a God-fearing man. Truth leads one to obey the commands of conscience."

"Conscience must be disciplined. I have found some of the best ways for doing this are by practicing non-violence, poverty, non-lust—and with it all, humility."

"What do I think of Christianism? Christianity is very good. Many Christians are very bad."

"If people loved poverty, there would be no crises. There is poverty, because some people have more than they are entitled to."

"One great idea that I would recommend to young people is to 'cast the beam out of your own eye first.' "

"What is my message to the women of Europe? Courage. Remember your power. Imitate the women of India who rose en masse. Women do not know their power. As Tolstoy said, 'women are under the hypnotism of men.' "

"My indebtedness to Tolstoy? He was one of my great teachers. He strengthened my faith in what I knew only darkly. By my own experience in South Africa and in India, I found a difference between non-resistance and non-violence. I worked on foundations laid by Tolstoy. As a good pupil I added to the legacy left me. What I learned as a pupil has under God been fortified a hundred fold. I found that non-resistance developed by experience into non-violence became a greater force than the force of arms. And, this is not a weapon of the weak. As an expression of the truth it is a weapon of the strongest. But, it is also a weapon that can be wielded by the weak—even by children, who, in India, have shown power for suf-

fering. And, women have shown the greatest capacity for suffering."

"The men of the West seem to have gone hopelessly wrong in the matter of war and disarmament. This field reveals a great opportunity for the women to assert their rights to be free from war and its debauchery."

"As to my vegetarian diet, it is of great value for me, but it does not seem to be for beef-eating Europe. Goldsmith well said that he had learned by the power that pitied him to pity 'the flocks that range the valleys free.' Men should cease to kill their fellow creatures."

"As for liquor, it is an invention of the devil. It is said that when Satan began to tempt man and woman, he dangled before their eyes the red liquor. What makes vile the heart, and paralyzes the brain of man should never be permitted to enter these bodies of ours that are 'temples for God.'"

"And, I have thought today as I have come along the shores of your beautiful lake, from Villeneuve to Lausanne, through the clean villages, what a Paradise God has made fit for a people of God."

In this appreciation, Gandhi struck a new note for him—as an observer of Nature.

These were three highly profitable hours spent with this modern Socrates, whom all the world is talking about. In a few days this amazing man of destiny will sail from Brindisi, carrying with him more power for the fate of mankind than the Roman Emperor carried who once sailed from the same port. His personality and messages find in me deep responses, and my prayer as a man of the West is that with all the power of invention and efficiency with which we have been endowed, we may possess wisdom for its use—and act friendly and justly toward the East before it is too late to avoid disaster.

SYDNEY STRONG

Twilight of a God

The beginning of the 1920's, that decade of the debunker in our national life and literature, saw the rise to fame of its most vigorous and insistent critical spokesman, that ruthless castigator and exposer of the shams and foibles of *homo sapiens* species *Americanus*, Mr. Henry Louis Mencken. After ten years of undisputed leadership of the revolt against drabness, stupidity and complacency in American literature, art, and politics, years during which he enjoyed extraordinary adulation and amazing vituperation, the beginning of a new decade seems to mark a very definite decline not only in the extent of his influence but in that belligerent vitality that used to compel the attention of friend and foe alike. A few years ago his critical pronouncements were awaited almost with bated breath and a new book from his pen was a major event in the world of letters. Today his latest articles in the *American Mercury* arouse about as much controversy as the daily reports of the weather man. Last year when his "Treatise on the Gods" appeared, a book he was obviously anxious to have accepted as a serious scientific treatment of religion, it was received by most of the critics who had hitherto been friendly as a rather feeble and outmoded attack written in the manner of the materialists of the nineteenth century. The typical reaction was summed up by Irwin Edman who wrote: "The book is largely concerned with the death of the gods. It confirms the report of the death of one minor deity, its author."

It is important to bear in mind that the most telling *critique* of Mr. Mencken's body of ideas has come not from his old foes the Humanists* but from men who have always had more spiritual affinity with him than with Professor Babbitt or Professor More. These men have been too busy during the past ten or twenty years assisting at the birth of a new creative spirit in American life and literature to turn their critical guns on one of their own members but now that the labor and pain of birth is over and the infant has entered upon a healthy childhood not a few of them have ventured to question the soundness of the methodology and ideas of one of the chief attending physicians.

Mr. Mencken has become, they say, merely repetitious. We are now pretty well aware of his general ideas on any given subject because he has insisted in telling us so often and so loudly. It is not alone the staleness of his ideas that begins to get a bit wearing but the verbal pyrotechnics and tricks of his writing style, now the novelty has worn off, cease to dazzle us as they once did. Likewise all those invented words of abuse and the erudite injection of German phrases no longer impresses us. When Mencken employed the terms "smuthound," "comstockery," "yokel," "Bible Belt," etc. for the first two hundred times nobody seemed to object; by the two hundred and fiftieth time they were beginning to sound all too familiar; and by the three hundredth we were ready to admonish him in the classic words of Mr. Victor Moore: "Change the act or back to the sticks." Another accusation brought against Mr. Mencken, even by some of his staunchest admirers, is that he has been guilty of vulgarity and bad taste and one does not have to be an advocate of "decorum" and "the inner check" to recognize the truth of the charge. If you are interested in specific examples, I refer you to his remarks in praise of the composer Schubert. "His merest belch," says Mr. Mencken, "was as lovely as the song of the sirens. He sweated beauty as naturally as a Christian sweats hate." It may be merely exaggerated fastidiousness to object to remarks of this sort as being in very dubious taste, but it *is* a little difficult to understand the workings of a mind whose contemplation of beautiful music is mixed up with thoughts of gastronomical eruptions and bodily secretions.

He has also been accused of vulgarity or at least immodesty because he is forever bragging about the possession of virtues that most writers are willing to let readers discover for themselves. When he declaims about his personal devotion to abstract truth and his belief in liberty, it is very easy to get the feeling that he is a little too conscious of the civilized qualities of his own mind; he has never been backward in insinuating that he is a member in good standing of that civilized minority who so valiantly preserve all that is noble in art and literature against the ravages of the mob. Mr. Mencken's championship of

*The reference here, of course, is to the literary and cultural Humanists and not to the radical religious movement among the Unitarians which is also known as Humanism.

the word "civilized" may well cause us to attempt, in the interests of clarity, a redefination of the word, as it is obvious that when he uses it he is not always thinking in the same terms as the rest of us. In this connection I have always been intrigued by his statement that Havelock Ellis is "the most civilized Englishman now living." Assuming the accuracy of this typically Menckenian use of the superlative and assuming also that Mr. Mencken himself is to be counted among the truly civilized, it must be apparent that there are types and types of the civilized man and that a wide gulf separates them. If the civilized man is one whose attitude towards the world and his fellow men is colored by tolerance, urbanity and a certain serenity amid the stupidities, meanesses and cruelties of mankind, then Havelock Ellis certainly deserves Mencken's characterization, but by the same standards Mencken himself is revealed as a little less than civilized. It is somewhat difficult to conceive of Mr. Ellis being perpetually engaged in doing warfare on the ideas and customs of the Bible Belt yokels or their English equivalents but he would bring to the business a calm and kindly but none the less incisive penetration and a complete absence of that indignant fury and hyperbole that invalidates so much of Mencken's criticism of his fellow countrymen. It is hard, too, to imagine Ellis indulging in some of the "civilized" pastimes Mr. Mencken gives us hint of in his various writings. Try and picture Ellis in the old Scheffel Hall in New York or in the rococo atmosphere of Lüchow's swilling seidel after seidel of Pilsner whilst he and his companions, Mr. Mencken and the late James Huneker and perhaps the dapper Mr. Nathan, discuss with great gusto and dogmatic surety the sad indifference of Americans to esthetics. . . .

But these objections are to surface qualities. The current attempts to evaluate Mr. Mencken's contribution to American thought and letters goes deeper and challenges both the validity of his critical philosophy and his spiritual equipment as a critic. His style has always been something of a handicap to anyone who is more interested in his ideas than in his ability to manipulate words. The intemperance of his language, the exaggerated boisterousness, has had a distinct appeal for Americans but to foreigners, and especially Englishmen, his style is puzzling and almost incomprehensible. Why, they ask, should a man who expects serious consideration of his ideas, sprinkle his books with so many vulgarisms, so much invective and exaggeration, so much vaudevillian humor? They do not have to seek very far for an answer for Mr. Mencken has himself very frankly related how he came to adopt such a style. When he was a young man "an ancient" advised him to make whatever he had to say interesting . . . "Unless you can make people *read* your criticisms, you may as well shut up your shop, and the only way to make them read you is to give them something exciting." Sometimes the result was obtained "with a bladder on a string, usually with a meat-axe." The important thing was to "knock somebody on the head every day." And whenever he acted upon this advice, Mr. Mencken frankly confesses, he found that it worked. His writings during the past twenty years reveal only too well how he took this advice to heart and his popularity, it should be added, proves just how well it worked. But while knocking somebody on the head every day may, like sitting on top of a flag-pole for two weeks, increase the public awareness of oneself, it is more than likely to blunt ones talent for accurate and unbiased observation. Certainly that is the effect it has had on Mr. Mencken as the most superficial perusal of his books will prove. If you want to see how many half truths he can pack between two covers, how many commonplaces he can garnish up with his bristling prose to look like new and profound truths, I recommend you to his "Notes on Democracy." He takes over two hundred pages to prove the truth of the proposition that democratic government is incompetent, stupid and corrupt. Every intelligent person in the land over twenty years of age would grant Mr. Mencken that and neither the use of a meat-axe or a bladder on a string is going to make it sound any more original or startling. If he knows of some system of government for America less fraught with danger he ought to be magnanimous enough to reveal it and not let us down with a diagnosis of democracy that was stale when he was in swaddling clothes. Perhaps he thinks that government under the dictatorship of a Mussolini or a Soviet Union is less stupid and more tolerable than government under a Coolidge or a Hoover but thousands of his fellow Americans reserve the privilege of doubting it.

Mencken's discussion of democracy reveals very clearly his utter inability to think through a problem rationally and without rancor. As Mr. Walter Lippmann has pointed out, he fails to see that the evils he deplores in modern life are the direct result of the things he cherishes most. That liberty in which he so passionately believes is the cause of most of the excesses of democratic government that seem to give him such an excruciating pain and the fact that he fails to understand it would seem to cast very serious doubts on his talent for logical thinking. And when he talks about a cure for democracy or a substitute for it he never gets beyond a vague mention of "aristocracy," a government founded on "aristocratic disinterestedness, born of aristocratic security." Where this aristocracy is to come from and who are to make up its membership he unfortunately fails to reveal. . . .

Another shining example of his adroit skill in presenting ideas in somewhat bizarre and dazzling form calculated to hide their staleness is his treatment of the subject of religion. As one more manifestation of what Mr. Ernest Boyd calls his "varied and restless activity" he not so long ago labored and brought forth the aforementioned learned "Treatise on the Gods," written in a manner and style suggesting that he was disposing for all time of God, the human soul and the immortal life. But upon close scrutiny one discovers a strange familiarity about these things Mr. Mencken gets so excited over; we seem to have heard them before. We *have* heard them before. He can't startle us by announcing that religion had its origins in the fears of primitive man; or by exposing the absurdities of theology; or by reciting the inaccuracies and errors of Holy Writ that were revealed by the higher criticism fifty and seventy-five years ago; or by proving that churches and priests have been hindrances to civilization. He ought to know that to the enlightened all these things are commonplaces and the fact that they happen to be true has no bearing whatsoever either on the validity or non-validity of the highest aspirations of the human soul. His skirmish with religion is conducted on an exceedingly low intellectual plane and his arguments are almost entirely those of

the soap-box atheist. The attitude behind this particular book of Mr. Mencken's is similar to that of professional unbelievers like Clarence Darrow, and Sinclair Lewis—who once sought to disprove the existence of God by getting up in public meeting and declaiming the hoary "if-there-is-a-God-let-him-strike-me-dead" speech. Arguments like these may still impress those simple souls who see something daring in the man who challenges orthodox theology but as far as genuine religion is concerned they are simply irrelevant.

Mencken once stated that Bernard Shaw's life work is to announce the obvious in terms of the scandalous. After digesting Mencken's *critique* of democracy and of religion one inevitably feels that the saying comes home to roost. . . .

In the field of literary criticism where he formerly exercised his greatest influence Mencken is no longer held to be infallible. The objections here are that he represents a mode of revolt and protest that is already passé and that his literary tastes, excellent as far as they go, are too narrow and limited. As long ago as 1922 Mr. Burton Rascoe declared: "The truth is that the literary generation now gaining recognition has progressed beyond the reaches of Mencken's esthetic equipment."

Mencken's bright stars in the literary firmament still shine but their lustre has been somewhat dimmed. We acknowledge that Cabell's "Jurgen" is, in the words of Mr. Newton Arvin, "the perfect flower of the mood of ironic disillusion," but both the disillusion and the ornamental style seem now to be somewhat artificial and a bit too studied. The brilliant social satire of Sinclair Lewis has for some of us lost a good deal of its efficacy because of an increasing tendency toward moral indignation on the part of Mr. Lewis and because there are very definite indications in his work that he is not so very far removed in spirit from his own George F. Babbitt. Mr. Dreiser's universal sympathy and pity for the plight of man caught in the meshes of a blind and unfriendly universe is seriously handicapped by the appalling incompetency of his craftsmanship and a style that seems to become progressively worse with the writing of each new book.

When we have, however, stated all the possible limitations of these writers and of Mr. Mencken as their critical spokesman we must in all fairness acknowledge their inestimable service to American letters as the leaders of that revolt that restored to our native literature a perception of the realities of life and their help in making secure the position of the artist as something more than a mere provider of entertainment. We have only to compare the state of the national letters in the early years of the present century when our leading novelists were such concoctors of literary confections as Gene Stratton-Porter, Harold Bell Wright, Mr. Tarkington and Mr. Wister, and the greatest social philosophers, clerical purveyors of sweetness and light like Samuel McChord Crothers and Henry Van Dyke, with the present day, when the literary horizon is limned with writers like Cabell, Lewis, Dreiser, Willa Cather, Eugene O'Neill and Edwin Arlington Robinson, all of whose work bears the stamp of the authentic artist, and we will realize the extent and magnitude of that revolt against the old regime in which Mencken played such a conspicuous part.

But we have very largely passed through our period of revolt and protest and there is arising a new school of writers who are more concerned with purity of style and the universal problems of the human soul than with merely waging furious war on local stupidities. The years 1920-1930 were preeminently the decade of disillusionment when it was the fashion to display a contemptuous skepticism toward all the sacred ideas that constitute the American credo. Much of that skepticism and protest was undoubtedly necessary as a prelude to the formulation of an adequate aesthetic of living in a new mechanical and de-spiritualized world but important as is the role of the iconoclast it must be admitted that devoting one's life wholly to negative revolt and protest is usually a severe handicap to the cultivation of that frame of mind that enables a man to view with critical detachment and a certain amount of sympathetic understanding those things against which he is protesting. In his inability to rise to a spiritual level higher than that of the yokels he detests, lies the inadequacy of Mencken's critical assault on American life and literature. There is something sardonic and cruel in the malevolence he displays towards the "booboisie" that suggests a kinship with the spirit that animated the witch-burners of an earlier day. A sensitive artist, like Miss Zona Gale for example, can delve beneath the stupidity and dullness of the small town mind to the essential core of humanness and can dissect that mind with pity, understanding and sympathy. Less austere artists like Mr. Mencken and Mr. Lewis attack the small town mind with a sledge hammer; it is only a butt for their satire. But satire when it becomes bitter is often mere fury and getting furious over the stupidities of *homo sapiens,* species *Americanus,* or any other breed, is admittedly a little less than philosophic.

That Mencken is no longer the critical influence in America he once was is plain to anyone who keeps abreast of current trends of thought. His contemporaries in the battle against obscurantism have progressed beyond him and are attempting to build tangibly on such fruits of victory as they have been able to gather while he is left on the field wildly throwing missiles after a retreating foe. The rising generation, never having been in the midst of the fray, are able to look upon him dispassionately; and while they can admire the sheer force and vigor of his attack they can no longer accept without serious reservations the intellectual attitudes he represents. The more thoughtful members of this new generation realize that freedom is a very poor thing indeed if one does not know how to use it and that there can be no genuine advance in culture without standards and a rigorous discipline of the mind. I should be very unhappy if anyone should think that by calling for "standards" and "discipline" I am aligning myself with the Humanists with their decalogue of "shalt-nots" and insistence on gentility. For my part I feel that it would be unfortunate indeed if those who are trying to achieve a satisfactory aesthetic of living in the modern world were forced to choose between Mr. Mencken and Professor Babbitt for their prophet. I have the feeling that Mencken is distinctly the lesser of the two evils for at least there is a hearty gusto about him that indicates a healthy enjoyment of life while Professor Babbitt and the Humanists, insofar as their writings are self-revelatory, display a distrust of life and natural instincts that must render spontaneous joy in living very difficult. By standards I do not mean a

system of precepts or checks imposed from without upon the free spirit but simply an inner balancing and weighing of values that will enable one to move with discrimination through the despairs, cynicisms, doubts and shallow cultures of the present-day world.

Mencken is the spiritual father of those young intellectuals who made a shrewd, hard cynicism the fashion during the decade of the twenties—he taught them to look with the steely eye of skepticism on all tradition, to dismiss the lessons of the past as trivial and unimportant, and to accept science as the only indisputable guide to living. He assured them that formal education was unnecessary and that all professors are frauds whose chief business is to curb freedom of the mind and make thinking difficult. (How widespread this anti-professorial attitude and hostility to disciplined training of the mind has become is well illustrated by the tremendous vogue of the outline writers like Durant and Van Loon with their short-cuts to culture and implied promises of knowledge without sustained intellectual effort.) He encouraged that indiscriminate self-expression that has filled our book shelves with the agonized and agonizing outpourings of writers whose preparation for creative work consisted almost solely of an incoherent and puzzled misunderstanding of the world in which they live and their relation to it. During those years his influence was tremendous and he assumed something of the proportions of a god. Only now when the post-war disillusionment has about run its course are we able to discern the feet of clay.

It has often been pointed out that despite the fact that he cherishes the notion that he is a heretical fellow whose ideas are inimical to the average American's philosophy Mr. Mencken is fundamentally the most American critic practising today. The basic articles in his creed have much in common with those of his fellow countrymen: He shares the national faith in "rugged individualism" and ignorance of economics, lays great stress on the importance of success in the worldly meaning of the word, and shows a nativism in interests and tastes that is all the more curious because of his conviction that it is impossible to live the civilized life in America.

It is also true that such a career as his could only be possible in a country like America. Americans in the mass sadly lack critical acumen, are naturally attracted to the transient sensation and very susceptible to high pressure publicity. Mencken, with the shrewdness of the journalist, has taken advantage of these native failings. He has obligingly publicized his private life because he understands the masses' insatiable curiosity for the intimate and personal. He has perpetually indulged in the sport of "knocking somebody on the head" because it makes a good show and a good show attracts the crowds. He is the inventor and the czar of one of the most flourishing rackets in American life, the racket of debunking. The result of all this adroit exploitation of American weaknesses is that he has become an institution and may, as Mr. Lippmann suggests, attain the position, analogous to that of George Bernard Shaw in England, of the grand old man of America. To the intelligentsia his reputation may not be as spotless as it once was but he has the compensating joy of knowing that he is firmly entrenched in the hearts of a vast horde of the common people. Professor Edman has commented very judiciously on this new audience. "He enables those with a mentality just one cut about the booboisie," says Mr. Edman "to feel they are miles above it, and makes Rotarians in Pullman smokers delightedly thumb their pages of the *Mercury* and their noses at the rest of the world."

Men like Van Wyke Brooks, Lewis Mumford and Waldo Frank, whose dissatisfaction with American life and letters is as thoroughgoing as Mencken's and whose intellectual backgrounds and critical equipment are far greater have never been able to approach him in extent of influence or popularity but they have the satisfaction of knowing they have stood serenely above the battle and have not compromised their own integrity by fighting with the enemies' weapons. Mencken's way has been easiest but it remains to be seen what the ultimate judgment of that way will be. For myself I suspect that when the historian of the future comes to write the critical history of America in the first quarter of the twentieth century he will assign Mr. Mencken to the limbo where dwell that vast company of rebels whose rebellion ultimately was a mere empty and ineffectual beating of the air. If he survives at all it will be chiefly as a humorist whose conception of the comic borders closely on the slapstick and burlesque.

MORTIMER SMITH.

A Man Is Slain

A man is slain in hate and fear.
Sad . . . So sad.—
The dead man sleeps. But not
the murderer . . . murder-mad!

We slay the murder-man.
He dies. Peace to him. . . .
Ashes make grasses thrive;
But we? *We die alive!*

We fight a war.
Coolly we plan *to kill to win. . . .*
If we knew
the men we slew
were our own souls
No warfare would begin!

Sacco! Vanzetti! Them we killed.
Calmly we killed these two.
They merely died. . . .
Our living selves we slew!

SAUL MERK

Man's Search for Truth

What thought of God have hungering men today
That they themselves have not sought out and found?
What spot of earth is christened holy ground
But where high souls have walked their human way?

What laws and precepts by which sages say
Life's good is best set free and evil bound,
But came from fine endeavors proven sound
By loves and agonies of young and gray?

All faith, all knowledge, springs in man's own heart,
And from his partial sight he molds his creed;
But age by age, as wiser years succeed,
He wins to clearer view and truer chart.

Who honors Truth, which brings new good to be,
Best serves mankind from olden darkness freed;
Who honors Truth, in thought and word and deed,
He best, O mighty Marvel, worships Thee.

The Christian Register.—James H. West.

Correspondence

Centralia

Editor of UNITY:

While justice-loving people have had their feelings stirred, particularly by the case of Tom Mooney, they cannot forget the others in similar plight. Among these are the men serving long sentences on account of the Armistice Day tragedy at Centralia, Washington, Nov. 11, 1919.

Centralia, located at the center of a great lumber industry, owed its prosperity largely to the lumber companies which dominated the life of the community. But prosperity did not reach all. The church Joint Report on the Centralia case says: "For many years conditions in the logging camps in the State of Washington had been intolerable. Hours were long and wages low. Provision for sanitation was negligible."*

In war days came the Industrial Workers of the World, a radical organization through whose aid, according to the Church report, "the loggers gained some betterments, including the eight-hour day." This roused the resentment of the lumber magnates and they effected an organization of the business men of Centralia for the purpose of driving out the I. W. W.'s. In due course the meeting place of the latter was raided, the furniture destroyed and the occupants "manhandled and expelled from town." This was in April, 1918.

The opening of a new I. W. W. hall in September, 1919, was the signal for renewed strife. A "Citizens Protective League" issued a call for a meeting in language that was characteristic: "Wobblies—How to get rid of them and stay rid is the question before the employers of Centralia. . . . Be there." At the meeting it was determined to appoint a secret committee to work out a plan.

The I. W. W.'s, believing that another raid on their hall was impending, sought protection from the authorities. Also they issued an appeal to the public in which it was charged that the lumber magnates were inciting the returned service men to do their bidding. (The I. W. W.'s were known to be pacifists, and the lumber companies obviously seized the opportunity to use Legionnaire patriotism to rid the district of I. W. W. strike leaders).

Details as to the beginning of the Armistice Day clash have been a matter of some dispute. The Church Joint Report says: "The halting of the Centralia contingent of Legionnaires in front of the building was probably by design, since some of the Legionnaires immediately interpreted it as a signal for hostilities and offered to rush the hall." Capt. Edward P. Coll, himself a Legionnaire, wrote in an open letter, Sept. 28, 1928 to Hoquiam Post: "The Parole Board has today the sworn affidavits of about thirty Centralia citizens stating that the Centralia Division in the Armistice Day parade broke ranks and began the attack. Three affiants, former friends of Warren O. Grimm (post commander) admit seeing him even breaking in the door of the I. W. W. hall before a shot was fired."

A few of the I. W. W.'s, anticipating the raid, had secured arms. The results of the clash were four Legionnaires mortally wounded, one I. W. W. member (himself a veteran) lynched and the furniture of the hall destroyed. Eleven other members were jailed and charged with murder.

The trial was given a military aspect. The courtroom was filled with ex-soldiers, who received $4 per day for attendance. The money came from a "Legion Fund," which, according to the church Joint Report, was donated largely by the lumber companies. After the trial certain members of the jury reported that the jury on a preliminary ballot voted for acquittal; but on further discussion before the formal ballot was taken it was decided to vote a verdict of second degree murder and recommend leniency. Thus by inflicting a light penalty further bloodshed might be avoided. Judge Wilson, disregarding the jury recommendation of leniency, gave sentences of 25 to 40 years in prison.

Judge Wilson's conduct of the trial is criticized in the church Joint Report, especially for excluding proper evidence favorable to the defense. Regarding the sentences imposed, the report says: "It is at this point that the student of the trial gains the strongest impression of injustice, an impression sharply accentuated by the fact that shameful crimes against the I. W. W.'s have gone unpunished to this day."

One of the jurors, E. E. Torpen, made the statement two years after the trial that "if these men had not been affiliated with the I. W. W.'s they never would have been convicted." Six other jurors have repudiated the verdict as having been forced by intimidation, and have petitioned the Parole Board for release of the prisoners.

In justice to the American Legion it ought to be said that certain post commanders have openly denounced the act of the Centralia mob, and have justified the I. W. W.'s in their self defense. Yet the Legion has taken no effective steps for the release of the prisoners, one of whom it now appears took no part in the riot.

Denver, Colo. F. S. KINDER

*The Centralia Case: A Joint Report on the Armistice Day Tragedy at Centralia, Washington, Nov. 11, 1919. Issued by the Dept. of Research and Education of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. The Social Action Dept. of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, and the Social Justice Commission of the Central Conference of American Rabbis.

Approval and Support

Editor of UNITY:

Here is a check for a subscription to UNITY which I would like to have sent to me at Geneva. . . .

I sail for Europe January 6. There in Europe I shall do all I can to get subscribers for UNITY, because this is the only American organ I know of that is broad enough in its principles to reach over to Europe and over to India. It seems to me it is capable of tremendous expansion. I know that there is not much money back of it, but that on the whole is fortunate. If you had piles of money you would not have principles.

So here goes to UNITY conquering the world!

E. H. JAMES

Concord, Massachusetts

A Correction

In the correspondence column of UNITY of December 14, (page 215) in a quoted letter from W. C. Potsmith, a typographical error occurred which rendered less clear the point of the paragraph. The word "go" was omitted from the sentence, "Wars will cease when 20,000,000 men become brave enough to tell a few hundred politicians to go to ——." [Ed.]

The Field

(*Continued from page 250*)

ber of councilmen. The voter should at least know the names of the candidates. We proposed to accomplish this objective by abolishing the use of party emblems in municipal elections. "Vote for men and not for birds," became the rallying cry, and our little group was called the Birdless Ballot League. The machine poked a lot of fun at the Birdless Ballot, but this only served to center attention on the movement.

There already existed many groups of citizens, each of which had confidence only in its own panacea for the ills to which the body-politic was heir. But several of these groups became attracted to the ideas of the Birdless Ballot League. With a limited objective it did not conflict with their pet theories, and it might be made to work in harmony with their own plans. Groups that never before had cooperated with one another were willing to cooperate with us. One group interested in the city manager form of government was in existence, and we extended our program to include a city manager.

To avoid introducing controversial questions at the first election, we drafted an amendment that changed but one section of the charter, substituting for a mayor and large council, elected largely by wards, a city manager selected by the council and a small council elected at large by proportional representation. To insure the additional necessary changes, we provided that six months after the first council had taken office it should appoint a commission of three to draft and submit to the electors a complete revision of the charter.

We conducted a campaign of education. We appealed to schools, churches and men's and women's clubs. Both sides of the question were presented, for we invited to our meetings speakers who represented the opposition. To

their astonishment, the old organization leaders found that some of the impractical reformers were convincing debaters, and usually the audience was with the reformers and against the well-known political leaders. As educational secretary to organize the women, we selected a woman who had formerly been the secretary of the League of Women Voters. In a short time women were working as precinct executives and block workers, calling on their neighbors, polling their precincts and delivering copies of our campaign literature.

At first the organization regarded this fight as a joke. The idea of a little group of political idealists accomplishing anything seemed to them ridiculous. But it was too late to stem the tide. An effort to defeat the movement by the old political trick of divide-and-rule failed. The old organization saw that almost everyone was in favor of a small council. It therefore proposed two additional amendments to the charter, both providing for a small council of nine but omitting from both the three other provisions of our charter amendment namely, election by proportional representation at large and without party emblems, nomination by petition and not by party primary, and provision for a city manager.

There was danger that the vote would be divided between the three mutually contradictory amendments, that none, or that more than one might receive a majority. The old gang had placed our amendment on the ballot between the two amendments proposed by it, labeling all three amendments as proposals to secure a council of nine. We refused to be caught in this trap, and devoted the last weeks of the campaign to urging our supporters to vote "no" on the first amendment, "yes" on the second, and "no" on the third.

Nineteen-twenty-four was a presidential year. Though we constantly insisted that the local question had nothing to do with national politics, the local Republican organization argued that to remove party emblems from municipal elections was an attack upon the two-party system. When the votes were counted, however, our amendment had won by more than two to one. The voters had separated national from local issues.

This was the beginning of the City Charter Committee. A constitution was drawn and the control of the organization was entrusted to a board of directors. Membership was to be composed of those who had either worked or contributed money, each member to have an equal vote. In May, 1925, it was decided to nominate our own candidates. A ticket consisting of six independent Republicans and three Democrats was selected and approved. The candidates were of a type never before presented in Cincinnati. The Democrats endorsed the ticket and thus we were given representation on the Board of Elections to protect our interests.

The next great decision was that no employee should be discharged because of his politics, that all present office-holders should be given a chance to make good under the city manager, but that thereafter all vacancies would be filled not by political appointment but by competitive civil service examination, and any employee of the city taking an active part in a political campaign would be discharged.

Thus we destroyed a large part of the power of the old organization. By depriving the City Charter Committee of the power of patronage, we prevented the growth of a new machine as a result of the victory.

At the next election in 1927, five of the six Charter councilmen were renominated, in addition to three new men and one woman. The results were even better than in the preceding election. Six Charter councilmen were elected, while the Republican organization elected two instead of three. The citizens of Cincinnati, men and women, had been kept united and a complete ward and precinct organization of voters had been built up. This sounds much more formidable than it actually was. Individual citizens in the various precincts had simply been persuaded to study the record of the candidates and to talk to their neighbors about them.

The first real test of the permanency of the reform in Cincinnati had been the ability to carry on the work successfully after 1929 with practically an entirely new council. The second great test was encountered in 1930 when, in the spring of that year, Colonel Sherrill, who had wrought such marvels in administrative service resulting in his endorsement by all political parties, resigned as city manager. Candidates from all over the United States were interviewed, records examined and skilled executives in administration consulted. Another triumph for citizen organization. Clarence A. Dykstra, whose experience and training combined the academic with the practical, was persuaded to give up his two positions as director of personnel and efficiency of the Los Angeles department of water power and professor of government at the University of California to come to Cincinnati as city manager.

Tested in three elections, the City Charter Committee can rightly claim that its method of organization has beyond question demonstrated its efficiency, and is worthy of being used as a model for other cities. Cincinnati has obtained clean and efficient government. Its streets are sanitary and in good repair. More new streets and boulevards have been built in the last six than in the preceding fifteen years. All this has been done in the face of a constantly decreasing tax-rate and of a reduction in net bonded indebtedness of $1,500,000 during the six years of city-manager government.

Greater than the material accomplishments, however, is the new spirit that has infused itself through the whole community. Gang politics no longer dulls the idealism of young men, for to obtain political preferment in Cincinnati it is not necessary to ally one's self with the political gang or to close one's eyes to the combination of vice and politics.

—The New York Committee of 1,000, 25 East 26th Street, N. Y. C.

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